



# Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

*Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982*

I was in prison and you came to me Matt. 25:36cESV



Taken from Fred Carlson's Devotional "*Lifetimes For My Friends*". This is one of the Bible Studies being made available to inmates and soon online on our website.

Unlike the magnificent Sidney Bridge, not all bridges serve an obvious, fruitful purpose. I once discovered a hidden bridge while traveling for more than an hour on a small state-forest road of Louisiana. Curiosity was my only motivation. The road kept getting smaller until it disappeared completely into the brush. Perplexed, I walked beyond and found a very substantial bridge over a small river. It had long-been blocked by a pile of dirt, overgrown thick. The bridge was heavily constructed; a massive amount of steel and concrete spanning about 100 ft, now hidden behind the brush? Apparently, it was a mistake; important to someone at one time in the past but unnecessary shortly after.

As I contemplated this, I was moved to consider its symbolic value; reminded of the fickleness of some of my own life-pursuits. Some efforts which seemed so justified and necessary, I later abandoned in the wake of other seemingly imperative tasks. So, it is with many of the pursuits of mankind. When we finally pause to look back and ponder, we may see bridges that go nowhere – if we can even see them at all.

Thankfully, I encountered the most precious bridge of all time when I was 10 years old. It was a June summer day. There had been serious tension in my family. I desired so much for my beloved family of Mom and Dad and 6 brothers to all get along with each other. I wanted a brief escape from all the fighting around the house so I walked to the end of our farm driveway. I stopped and looked back at our beautiful farm. Then in that despairing moment, the Holy Spirit became vividly real to me. He drew me to Himself, offering a life-long connection; my spirit was lifted and I was given a positive, joy-filled frame of mind. My brother Martin was mowing hay and the scent of red clover permeated the air, a heavenly fragrance.

In Vacation Bible School I'd recently learned of a Heavenly Father but, until that instance, I hadn't crossed over. I felt encouraged; I asked God to stay close and help me understand my family. I asked Him to bring us more of the hope and beauty I felt in that moment. More than anything I knew that I wanted/and

Crossing Over Cont. on pg. 3

## March 2021 MEC News

### Spotlight: Mariah Fischer



*Mariah was in 3 of the county jails that have volunteers which you support, Washington, Ramsey and Scott Counties.*

*One of Mariah's sisters had passed away from an overdose, her mother and another sister also died. At that time, Mariah dove deeply into drugs and alcohol, did not care if she lived or died. She submitted to shame, abuse, and guilt, pushed everyone*

*away and lost her children. Much of this story are her own words.*

*"My brother Brett did not give up on me, but asked me to get on my knees, pray to God, go to every Bible Study that I could, and go to a faith-based treatment center." God provided Bible Studies in the jails. Even though she had prayed while she was there, Mariah still "wanted to go out and use drugs again," but the LORD had other plans. "The judge asked me how old I was and how long I planned to keep living like this. I was 35 and admitted that he had a good point." She began to seek His plan for her. In 2017 she was furloughed to MNATC and following that was able to go to Healing House.*

*When I asked her what she remembered helping her while she was incarcerated, Mariah replied, "My brain was so bad from coming off a lot of crap at that point. I remember Scott County where I was in the longest. We did Bible Studies and artwork. That was amazing. It was what got through to me and I started my relationship with God. Being*

Mariah - Cont. on pg. 2

## March 2021

MEC Spotlight Mariah Fischer (maiden name Carlson).....page 1&2  
 Crossing Over by Fred C .....page 1,3&4  
 Ministry Friend Shout Out: Widows Might.....page 3  
 Prayer Requests.....page 4

Mariah Cont. from pg. 1

*Psalm 18:16 He reached down from heaven and rescued me. He pulled me, He drew me, He lifted me out of many deep and raging waters*



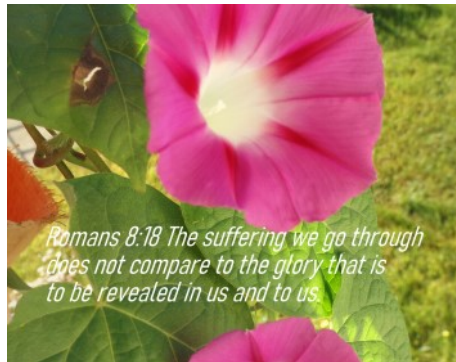
*incarcerated is hard. It was the first time in a long time that I had been sober. It was a hard time, but it was what I needed. It was really good to have that connection with the outside world, to know that someone cared. Everyone who went seemed to love it and opened up. It was what I really needed. It prompted us to have our own Bible Study. Who would imagine? All these girls, who were doing the opposite out on the streets, would do this? It was great. I remember doing some collages and some drawing. (Susan J. and Barb B, do the art classes. Sheryl O., Enell E., Shandra N., Jan M., Laurie S., Lisa & Renee F., Lynne S. do the Bible Studies. Church was on a rotating schedule with Anne B., Bill A., Gary B., Steve B., Tony F. & John U.). My brain [began healing].*



*"I remember the worship music. It was some of the first that stuck with me. The song "Redeemed" brought tears to my eyes and healing to my heart. Some of the lessons about God giving us an inheritance, that we*

*would inherit eternal life and the good life we could have here. I was still stuck in my own selfish thinking and needed healing. As much as I wanted to change my life, a part of me wanted to go back to the old life. It was a relief when they brought that message to us, that we could have a new life. I felt like I was never going to get out of there and be free. I wanted to get out and go to Teen Challenge but still had one county to go. I was in Rice county, it was only for a few weeks but seemed like forever. The Bible Studies got me through and taught me that I could focus on that and have peace. Now I pray about everything and am actually glad that I went through that, as it is what I needed to bring me the peace in life."*

*How important is family and Christ's family for someone who has been living in death? Prayers and direction brought her to Christ and to life. "Completing Teen Challenge was the hardest 15 months ever. I am grateful for my dad who stuck by my side, my children's father (who graduated from the same program a year earlier) who would bring them to visit, and the support of her sister and brothers. My mentor, who is still with me now, was the best thing from the program. They all gave me hope and strength to keep pressing on.... I was **not** happy about going to Healing House, but that was transformed when I found Kay and Mikki who were case coordinators. These two women I had met in my previous program." were among what and who she ended up loving. "Fellowship, chapel, understanding staff, and others who had been where I had, showed me how much God loved me" and allowed Him to work miracles. Among these were a restraining order lifted, restoration with her children's grandparents and her children, a new relationship and marriage to Mark Fischer."*



*Romans 8:18 The suffering we go through does not compare to the glory that is to be revealed in us and to us.*

**M**ore  
than a token  
Prayer

**You are a part of  
the battle for lives.  
Pray also for the  
many who are in your  
county, Who need the  
LORD, to seek Him and  
the healing He gives!**

*"I had not worked for 6 years, so I was nervous to be in the working world again. Dan, [who is part of MEC] did Chapel at Healing House and he does trainings at Luther Toyota. He helped me get work here where I have been for a year." Two of the Scriptures that have given life to Mariah are in Psalms and Romans (See these with the pictures here.)*

*Pray for Mariah, for continued discipleship and that she will be able to volunteer with MEC.*

Crossing Over by Fred Carlson from pg. 1

needed to remain close to His Spirit and voice. I was immediately bathed in a rich, new confidence. I received from Him a profound message: "Everything will be OK." I returned home eager to share the experience with my Mom who was hanging up clothes in the backyard. The fragrance of a Honeysuckle bush nearby seemed to encourage me to speak. I told her God had spoken to me. She turned to me and with total attention asked "What did He say?" At hearing the message, Mom was encouraged and my faith was affirmed.

**Isaiah 51:10 (NIV)** "Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over?"

### Crossing Over

*A precious bridge*

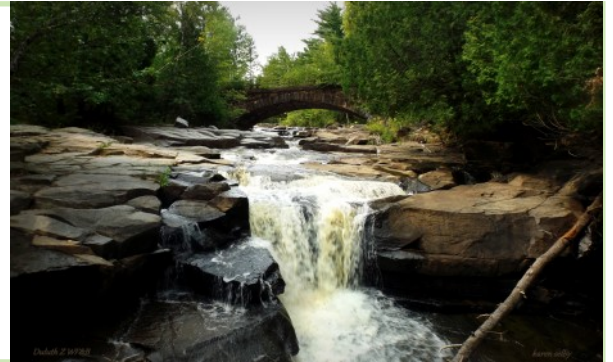
*Your outstretched arms*

*Hold back the waters*

*And calm the sea*

*By faith we cross over - All this for me.*

Permission given to use for non-commercial purposes;  
"Lifetimes for My Friends" by Fred Carlson



Time out (or time in!) - Precious Father, I praise you for making a WAY that I may cross over from despair to hope. Thank you for your mercy and kindness. Forgive me for those times when I have squandered much of your grace. Still, your love endures. You remain faithful even when I am not. Amen.

Today in-Christ - I'll confess the burdens of my heart to my Heavenly Father and ask Him for greater faith to know that in-Christ everything will be OK. Amen.

**Ephesians 1:17 (NIV)** "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better."

In this entry Fred refers to crossing over from a life without God to a life with Him. He indicates that he heard about God and the relationship that God wants with us and he asked Him to stay close and to understand others. Here are the two verses Fred refers to in his entry and some questions related to help understand them better.

**Isaiah 51: 7-8 & 10** "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation."

### Questions for the Study

1. What does Fred mean when he says he crossed over a symbolic bridge when he was 10?
2. One side of the bridge was conflict, disappointment and no hope. What was on the other side of the bridge?
3. What was the bridge that provided the hope, peace and understanding that he felt and then went back to share with his mother?
4. Why do you think he was fearful of sharing it?
5. What gave him the courage to do so?
6. How did it affect his mother when he did?
7. Are you willing to ask God to speak to you and to listen?
8. Are you willing to listen and learn to understand the Word He has already given us?
9. Can you see that what God has to say is more important than what the world or men have to say to you?
10. Who is Isaiah referring to when he says - Was it not you who dried up the waters and made a road?
11. That verse is referring to when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt and when God provided the plagues that forced Pharaoh to let them go and they were escaping, they crossed the red sea. You can read that story in the book of Exodus. This is a true life happening and it correlates with our lives and the things we need to be freed from in order to know, follow, and love God. What do you feel binds up your life and love and that you need to be freed from?
12. There are at least 100 verses and situations in the Bible where God made a way where there did not seem to be one. What do you need Him to help you with?

13. What does He mean by “My righteousness will be forever”? Many things are temporary and will be gone like our clothing, but the Spirit of God is forever and so are our spirits. Will we just go after the temporary things or will we listen and go with His words and Spirit, going after the things that will last forever?
14. . What is Salvation? In the example of a bridge bringing us from one place to another Christ is between us and God. He brings us from an old life, where we are enemies of God (against Him or that we do not pay any attention to Him), to being friends and family with Him. Christ lived a life as a human and understands all the trials we go through. He was tested far more than we have been and He did not sin. That is what qualified Him to pay the price for us with his life. When he was murdered, he could have called the angels to stop the people and save him, but He gave His life for us so that our sin was placed on Him and we could be saved from sin and from all the negative, hopeless, and destructive ways of life to a good life with God.
15. The second verse that Fred uses here is - “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.” Ephesians 1:17 See Matthew 5 for the LORD’s prayer and how Christ taught us to talk to and understand Father better. See Jeremiah 29 & Psalm 139 to understand more of God’s goodness and love for you and encouragement to seek and Know Him.
16. Paul is asking God for good things for others. What are you asking God for?
17. He keeps on asking, “Are you willing to keep on asking God for good things for yourself and for others?”
18. Are you willing to ask the Holy Spirit to work in you to show you how to truly love?

### A few Prayer Requests

- ◆ **Pablo Montanez** – Pablo has now started online-bible-study at HCADC and 4-5 inmates are allowed to participate. Last Friday he had three inmates to whom he presented Jesus and the Gospel. While two of them are already believers, the third one is still seeking and the others would like to pray for his salvation. Pablo also asks for prayers for this COVID-19- lockdown to be over, so he can go back to in-person teaching.
- ◆ Pray for **your county!!!! Yes, Your county!!!** Go to the last few newsletters for Hennepin and Ramsey. Go to your county’s website under jails and pray for the needs you see there and for individuals.
- ◆ Pray for inmates to request the lessons that we make available to them. Currently over 60 a week but about 1/2 of the written ones are being taken, the phone lessons are small attendance Some of the video ones have recently been started while others have been delayed.
- ◆ Pray for the Bible Studies that are being prepared for the inmates and for them to be available on our website for volunteers and individuals to be used in the future.

### **Ministry Friend Shoutout -**

We are not alone in service to Christ.  
This month our shout out is to.

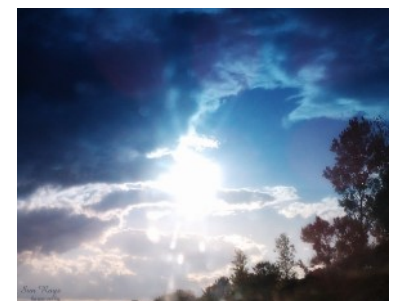
To help widows connect so they may live, heal, grow and, in time, thrive. It exists to serve today’s community of widows, and is an expression of God’s Might at work in their world.

[www.widowmight.org](http://www.widowmight.org)

- Relationships
- Helping hand
- Networking
- Tools
- Resources & Information

Widow Might PO Box 1738  
Maple Grove, MN 55311

Phone: 763.486.8192 [info@widowmight.org](mailto:info@widowmight.org)



To remove your name from our mailing list, please email us with REMOVE in the subject line, call or write. Please visit our website for articles, studies, prayer aides, resources or to donate.  
**[www.mecjailministry.com](http://www.mecjailministry.com)**, [mec@usfamily.net](mailto:mec@usfamily.net) 651-408-1300 PO 542, Wyoming MN 55092.  
*Saul Selby Director, Karen Associate Dir. Nadine Behrens Office Admin. & Karen Kennedy volunteer*